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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God of love, whose plan for history is to unite all things in You, bring unity to Capitol Hill. We do not ask for uniformity, with its leveling process that reduces everything and everybody to its lowest common denominator. We ask for true unity, with its bountiful diversity in which each person finds individual fulfillment in the community of love. Lord, give our Senators unity like the symphony with its variety of instruments, its many different notes which produce grand harmonies. May our lawmakers produce these melodies by seeking to understand before being understood, to console before being consoled, and to serve before being served.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 11, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The Senator from California is recognized.

THIS RECESSION

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I would like to take this time to bring us up-to-date on where we stand with this recession, nationally and in my home State, and also to alert the American people to something.

In 1993, when Bill Clinton got elected, this country was in a lot of trouble. We had terrible deficits—we had a terrible trade deficit, we had debt. President Clinton and the Democratic Congress came in, and we said we have to get our country back on track. The President put together a budget. I wish to remind people that budget did not get one Republican vote. I wish to read to you what Senator Lott, on August 6, 1993, said about that Clinton budget.

As we all know, that Clinton budget got us on the path of deficit reduction and an actual surplus in our fiscal year budget. It set us on the path of debt reduction. As a matter of fact, we were far along on that path. We expected to

have no debt whatsoever. When George Bush got in office, the Republicans took over and the deficits soared and the debt soared.

I wish to read what Senator Lott said in 1993. Remember, it was a very similar situation in terms of a budgetary crisis, a fiscal crisis. When Bill Clinton's budget passed—and we helped him get it passed—we set off on a path of economic recovery that was unmatched. Listen to this. This is Senator Trent Lott, August 6, 1993, in opposition to the Democrats' economic plan:

This is a pork alert; Pork alert. This bill is 1,800 pages. We will not know until next April 15, probably, all the stuff that's in here. Are we talking about a little money? . . . No, we are talking about big sums.

He says:

So when you stand up and say Republicans have not been involved, let me assure you, we should have been involved. We would have liked to have been involved. But we would like to concentrate on spending cuts at first. And then talk about other things like economic growth incentive activities, that we would like to see considered in this process.

The Republicans who have been in charge for a very long time have been the party of "no": Do it my way or it is the highway. Only I can write the perfect bill.

I have said, and I say this respectfully to my friends, I could write a perfect bill—for me. I can assure you the people of California would like my bill better than the bill that is before us. Each of us can stand and write the perfect bill.

So we have a choice. We can allow this new President to have the opportunity to do what he said he would do during the campaign, which is to ensure that this National Government becomes part of the solution.

Believe me, I defend my Republican friends' right to say no, no, no. They have every right to do it. They have absolutely every right to do it. What I feel a little sad about is they feel they have to filibuster; each and every time

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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